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is most important; it was made in the richest manner for a stately personage, brother-in-law of the King, Knight of the Garter and St. George, a great worthy in Elizabeth's affairs, brother-in-law of Sir Philip Sidney, Maecenas of artists and writers, and himself somewhat of a herald, as we see from his studies in blazonry which it bears. The sale of this splendid suit made no little stir in conservative circles in England, and efforts were made to secure it for the nation. In France or Italy, it would have been promptly sequestered as a national treasure; in London it passed duly to the highest bidder, Sir Joseph Duveen, who will presently place it in the American market.

The fifth sale dispersed the remainder of the Beardmore Collection, of which a number of specimens had already been sold in the Morgan Williams Collection. Here were two hundred lots of old provenance, most of them pictured in the folio catalogue (1844) of the Beardmore gallery at Uplands. Among the better pieces of this collection were a pistol buckler of the guard of King Henry VIII, a suit of tilting armor, engraved in bands, with several supplemental pieces, numerous enriched firearms, and, especially, a rare series of early polearms, English and Continental, including types which appear never before to have turned up at public sale.

B. D.

A REMINISCENCE OF A POSSIBILITY

AS a contribution to the history of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, it is interesting to know that, as the following letter shows, nothing but a quarrel, presumably over a question of backsheesh, prevented the Museum from beginning its art collections with a number of important Egyptian antiquities. Thus chance undoubtedly determines the beginnings at least of many of our American art museums.

MY DEAR MR. ROBINSON:

I told you a few days ago about some of the adventures which my father (John Taylor Johnston), my mother, and I had

in Egypt in the winter of 1870, and you asked me to write down the tale as I had told it to you.

It was about January 1, 1870, that we sailed from Cairo in a dahabiyeh on our way up the Nile, where we visited the temples and other antiquities which a tourist was expected to visit. My father was intensely interested in all the wonderful things he saw, and as he was also much interested in Bible history, he read to us, as we voyaged up the river, those Bible stories which had any connection with the stories of the Pharaohs; especially was this the case with Rameses II, the Pharaoh, who as the Bible says, "hardened his heart" and "oppressed the children of Israel."

In due time we reached Luxor, where our first excursion was to the Tombs of the Kings. As our donkeys took us over this long ride we were much surprised to see on every side pieces of mummy cloth, long strips and small bits, some of very heavy cloth, some made from a coarse fibre of some kind, and some almost as fine and delicate as a pocket handkerchief. We could not understand where it all came from, as we had seen nothing of this kind elsewhere, and our donkey boys and guides professed complete ignorance.

In Father's diary he spoke of crowds of men and boys in this Valley of the Kings, with "scarabei, small idols, coins, etc." He was finally persuaded to buy an amulet and some bead necklaces which he ascertained later, rather to his surprise, were genuine.

At Luxor we found a United States consul, Mustapha Aga by name, and he introduced us to a Mr. Smith, a dealer in antiques, who had lived in Luxor for over ten years. The latter visited us on board and told us that he had a great many extraordinary things for sale which he would like to show us. We were nothing loath but we were rather amused by the caution and mystery with which Mr. Smith introduced us into his darkened house. This house was, I think, built of mud like the native houses, except that it had a second story. He left us below while he climbed the steep stairs to "open the windows" but when we ascended we found

nothing really opened, only that the solid window shutters were slightly bowed. In this half-light we saw wonderful things—mummies and mummy cases on the floor or standing upright against the walls of the rooms, and one of the walls was occupied by an enormous heap of papyri. They were piled at least four feet high against a wall and sloped down fully half-way across the room, and there were as well odd ones which had rolled here and there. I think there must have been at least one or two hundred of them. There were other things which I do not clearly remember, but I know that on the window sills were many scarabs and beads and other small articles. Mother said in her diary, "Mummies and cases stood around; hands, feet, skulls, etc., were in profusion."

We left as secretly as possible and that evening Mr. Smith spent with us on our dahabiyeh. Father told us that he had asked Mr. Smith for a price on all the antiquities we had seen but he answered that as he had many more very valuable objects to offer, including royal mummies, he would like Father to see some of these before any price was named.

The last day of our stay at Luxor Mr. Smith took Father once more to his house but preferred that he should go alone. After their return Father came below to prepare paper and ink for writing out a contract, and I think to make an initial payment on account. During his absence a terrible noise was heard on shore. We all rushed on deck and saw a most unseemly triangular fight taking place on the bank. Our dragoman (Pietro), Mustapha Aga, and Mr. Smith were all rolling on the ground and beating each other with their fists while cries arose from the crowd on shore and from our sailors on board; a most disgraceful scene! It was undoubtedly a question of the division of backsheesh among the three men.

I had never seen my father so angry.

He at once went on shore accompanied, I think, by one or two of our men, pulled Pietro out of the *melée*, ordered him on board, gave the word to set sail and, everything being ready, off we went. Father was much annoyed over this ignominious ending to such an important transaction, so much so that he would not talk about it except perhaps to Mother.

When we reached Ghizeh, opposite old Cairo, they brought us a large package of mail, the first we had had since we sailed up the river from Boulak. It must have been at this time that Father received a cablegram from New York, offering him the first Presidency of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He was very much pleased, sent an immediate acceptance, and made arrangements for hastening our return home. I have often thought that he intended this important collection for the new Museum. He did not say so, however, and it was not until the great find of royal mummies and other treasures at Deir-el-Bahari in 1881 that he mentioned it again to me, saying that he had little doubt that these treasures were those that had been offered to him by Mr. Smith, and that the royal mummies which had just been discovered included that of the Great Rameses II. As these mummies had been secretly removed by the natives from the Tombs of the Kings and hidden in a tomb at Deir-el-Bahari, the mystery of the quantity of mummy cloth which we saw in 1870 in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, and of the many genuine scarabs and other antiquities which had been offered to us, is easily explained.

My husband and I spent the winter of 1884 in Egypt and there in the Boulak Museum among the other Pharaohs we looked upon the face of him who had "hardened his heart" and had so sorely and for so long a period "oppressed the children of Israel."

EMILY JOHNSTON DE FOREST.